

OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND HABITS IN CHILDHOOD

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Leisure time during school years is reduced to minimum as educational curriculums take up most of children's daytime. The matter gets worse as watching TV prove to be the main out-of-school activity. The aim of this study was to record the weekly habits and activities of pupils when school time finished. 655 pupils (393 boys, 262 girls) aged 5,5-14,5 years old who visited the Pediatric Department of our Hospital during 2002 filled in a typical questionnaire. They all attended primary or secondary schools. Results: All children reported that they watched TV 1-2 hours daily but only 60% of them and 80% of their parents paid any attention to the "suitability warning signs". 75% of the children were influenced by the advertisements concerning new toys or foods. 65% of them exercised 30-60 min daily (83% of the boys and 31% of the girls) and 65% attended music lessons (22% of the boys and 87% of the girls). 60% were taking lessons in foreign language and 90% read literary books 30-60 min daily (89% of the boys, 91% of the girls). 25% of them used computers 30 min daily. Conclusions: Out of school activities were mainly restricted to the house environment and TV seemed to play an important role in everyday life where as exercise was not considered as necessary as it should.

